

## CORRESPONDENCE.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for the statements made, or opinions expressed by our correspondents.

Mr. Editor: In your report of my speech of Friday evening June 13, upon the Resolution of want of confidence, you quote me as saying: "I was not in favor of the resolution but now it has come."

Now, I wish to say that it is not a correct version of my remarks. What I did say was "That I was in favor of the resolution, but believed it was the duty of the Ministry to resign, because their conduct in the House was a disgrace to the country and this assembly, and that their conduct in the Treaty matter was not fair to the public, and further that the principle involved in the amendment was dearer to me than the future of the Attorney-General."

You further quote me as saying that "I see no reason for the resolution of want of confidence." Whereas, I did say that my party was elected to the House to find cause for the removal of the Cabinet, and that I believed it was necessary at this stage of affairs for the peace and safety of the country that the Cabinet should be removed, but that the first action of the Legislature should be directed to establishing a precedent that a minority of the Cabinet shall not rule.

Yours respectfully,  
A. ROSA,  
Member elect for Waialua, Oahu.  
Honolulu, June 16, 1890.

Was Dr. Hyde's Letter "Slanderous?"

Mr. Editor:—In making a brief rejoinder to the Bishop of Oahu in behalf of the absent Dr. Hyde, it is to be premised that I hold no particular right to speak for him; nor do I know what line of reply he would himself see fit to adopt. It is certainly to be regretted that the Bishop should not have been ready to make his attack until the object of it had gone away. I should at least have been spared the disagreeable duty of drawing upon myself some of the virulent abuse which has been poured upon Dr. Hyde in this business.

I am far from imputing this abuse to any instigation of the excellent Bishop or his clergy. In the present case, I regard with respect his honest zeal in vindicating the reputation of his late subordinate. It is with no intent to disparage the Bishop that I try to point out some mistakes which I think he has made. He has satisfied himself of Father Damien's purity—and seems to think others should also be convinced—by his own "secret and serious" investigation of the matter. Such an investigation may doubtless be a useful preliminary to a more public inquiry, in the conduct of which all parties would be represented. I assume that Dr. Hyde was not consulted nor asked by the Bishop for the grounds of his allegations against Damien's character. Yet the Bishop has assumed to condemn unheard those allegations as "slanderous!" I submit that he is uttering his decision somewhat prematurely.

For myself, I have never had opportunity to form any decided opinion as to the charge of impurity. During the past year, from many diverse sources, hearsay evidence, apparently somewhat reliable has been received, such in kind and quality, as—speaking moderately—to lend much color to the charge. Notwithstanding some intimacy with Dr. Hyde, his aversion to discussing such topics has left me rather ignorant of the nature of the evidence in his hands. I believe that he possesses a quantity of such evidence. He has had exceptional opportunities of knowledge about Father Damien, through his long and constant correspondence with persons at the leper settlement. I only know that he is firmly convinced of the truth of his allegation of impurity. Still I cannot assert that he is sound in his conclusions. That question has not been tried before any competent court of inquiry. For any man to assert that the charge is untrue, is certainly premature.

One fact stands out beyond question that on this point Damien had for a long time borne a very sullied reputation, whether justly or not. A very painful bad reputation of this sort actually existed, as even the Bishop impliedly admits, as R.L. Stevenson's letter intimates, and as I hold some documentary evidence to prove. Some explanation may possibly be found to prove Damien innocent of all the various offences, alleged in the different reports of his misconduct in this respect, and inquiry may even prove some of those reports to have grown out of no tangible basis. Yet the extensive growth of such bad reputation, and the wide-spread belief in it must be seen to very materially affect the culpability of people who repeat such charges. I claim in behalf of Dr. Hyde, that in view of his own fixed belief, and of the support lent thereto by the afore-said bad reputation of Damien, it is not fitting or sensible to charge him with malice or with lack of charity in imputing to Damien the char-

acter he did, even if he shall prove to have been in error. A very unfortunate error it will have been, and one that he will, if convinced of it, be sure to make all possible amends for. But I submit that "slanderous" is not at all the term to apply to it.

An extraordinary furor arose last year in England to exalt this man into a martyr or a saint, forgetful of the fact that many cases of devotion of the life to the welfare of lepers have existed, and that on the part of persons not, like Damien, utterly devoid of fastidiousness. This craze spread to America. Miss Stuart Phelps, a noted Protestant authoress, termed him the "Hawaiian Christ"—"no sacrifice like his since Golgotha." We were told that he Christianized Molokai, till then a pagan island, and that he redeemed the shamefully neglected lepers from a pit of misery.

Last August, just after this whirlwind of absurdities had reached us, a clerical friend wrote in familiar way a number of queries about Damien to Dr. Hyde, based on previous information gained here. Not dreaming of publication, Dr. Hyde replied in a few brief and hasty words, such as he fully believed to be true, and after several months of inquiry, still believes to be the truth. Perhaps he was mistaken, but I think "slanderous" is hard language to use about it.

It is well-known that Dr. Hyde was extremely annoyed at the publication of this private note, which, as he easily foresaw, has brought a long-continued storm of abuse upon his head. Men generally rage and tear when one breaks in upon their illusions. Nevertheless, it may prove that Dr. Hyde's letter will before long be recognized as having—though unintentionally—done the world an important service, in exploding an absurd and mischievous delusion.

EDITOR OF THE FRIEND.

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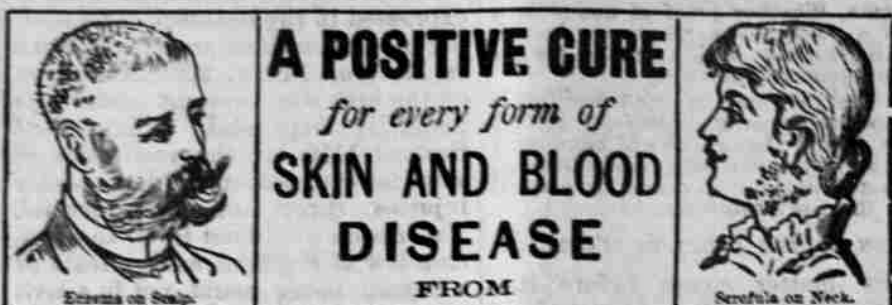
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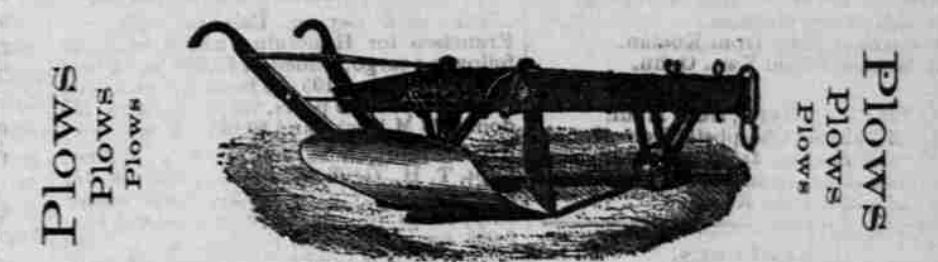
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